

BRASS MONKEY  
Head of Steam



TSDL575  
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photograph by Peter Stevens



### ① BOLD ARCHER • DEAREST DICKY

Bags of swash and buckle in this Boys' Own yarn based on one of the items in the vast repertoire of the prolific Norfolk singer Harry Cox. The song is allegedly descended from one of the Scottish Mafia ballads, *Archie O Cawfield* (Child No.188), but our version is pleasantly ambiguous about time and place. As Dicky is clearly the hero of the day, we duly celebrate with the unique morris dance tune named in his honour, from Field Town in Oxfordshire.

### ② THE RED LION HORNPIPE • PECKETT'S HORNPIPE • THE WELCH HORNPIPE

Triple hornpipes, with three strong beats to the bar, like a slip jig, were gradually eased out of circulation by the increasing popularity of the newfangled tunes in common time – like *The Sailor's Hornpipe* – in the middle of the eighteenth century. But up till then they had been extensively used for dance music from at least the later 1600s, and quite possibly for much longer than that. Northumbrian pipers never lost the repertoire completely, and you can still hear this rhythm very much alive in the music of Quebec, as well as in a far more exotically dressed version in Eastern Europe.

Plenty of these tunes can be found in old English collections, and these three are among the many delights to relish in John Offord's wonderful selection (considerably updated and enlarged from his original edition from 1985) 'John of the Green – The Cheshire Way', published by Green Man Music in 2008.

### ③ THE LOSS OF THE RAMILLIES

This song tells the true story of the wreck of HMS Ramillies in February 1760, with the loss of over 700 men. A ferocious hurricane along the South coast caused a huge amount of damage on land and sea, and in the appalling conditions the crew lost their bearings while trying to make for the shelter of Plymouth Sound, and the vessel broke up on the rocks at the inlet which is still named after the incident today – Ramillies Cove.

Three completely different songs about this event have been identified, and although this particular one seems never to have had the benefit of being printed as a broadside to boost its circulation, the fabulously catchy tune has made sure that this is the one that turns

up most frequently amongst traditional singers. John first spotted it in Roy Palmer's 1973 book 'The Valiant Sailor', which includes a version just recently collected by Alan Bruford in the Orkneys, in 1971, from Peter Pratt, aged 92.

### ④ NELSON, THE FALLEN HERO • THE DEATH OF NELSON

Our lament – *The Fallen Hero* – was composed by Nathaniel Gow (1766–1831), who was one of the sons of the famous Scottish fiddler Niel Gow, and who was quite a star himself in his day, regularly playing for royalty and aristocracy in England as well as in his native land. He compiled and published numerous influential books of Scottish music which mixed traditional melodies with compositions by himself and his father.

Nelson truly was loved by ordinary people and the massive outpouring of collective grief when he was killed can be felt in the words of this song published shortly afterwards. This way with the song comes substantially from the Southampton singer Mr George Wigg, recorded on cylinder by George Gardiner before World War One (and almost certainly not by Vaughan Williams as many have stated previously). Mr Wigg had four verses and they, plus the additional two printed by Roy Palmer in his 'Songs of Vaughan Williams', form the basis of what is sung here.

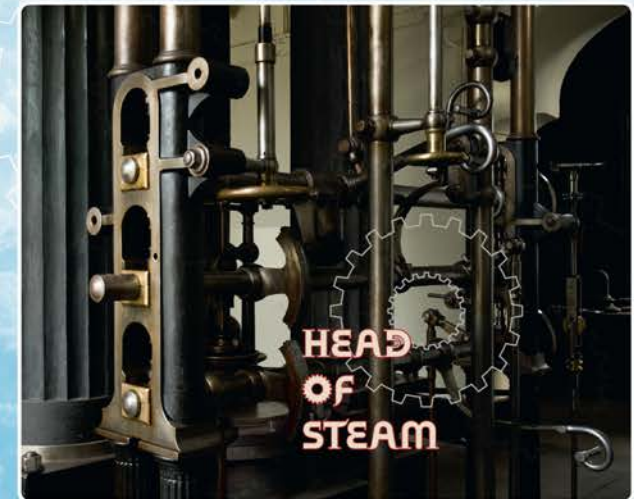
Notes by John Kirkpatrick  
and Martin Carthy (for those songs where he is the singer).



TSCD575

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### ① THE MOLDAVIAN SCHOTTISCHE • THE SNOWDROP POLKA

We begin with a tune which has popped up in the repertoire of a few traditional English musicians – Beatrice Hill, Dennis Crowther, and Stan Seaman, among others – but never with a proper name. What a delight to announce, therefore, that it appears with its full name and title, and in all its three part glory, in the manuscript book of Mr William Tittle, of Pave Lane near Newport in Shropshire, who was certainly active, and in great demand, around 1860. Thanks are due to his descendant, Brian Tomkinson, the current owner, for copying his family tunes and passing them round to give them a new lease of life.

*The Moldavian Schottische* was composed by Charles Louis Napoleon d'Albert, a French person, born in 1809, but who lived in England from the age of seven onwards. He was a dance teacher and ballet master, who wrote a book on ballroom etiquette and composed innumerable popular waltzes, quadrilles, and polkas, of which the best known – *The Sultan Polka* – is now the tune to the nursery rhyme "One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Once I caught a fish alive".

*The Snowdrop Polka*, uncredited to any composer, peeps out from the 'Fourth Collection of Merry Melodies' published in the 1880s by James S Kerr in Glasgow. All four volumes are fabulous value, with over 440 tunes in each book.

### ② THE PRESS GANG

Based on one of the songs sung to Cecil Sharp by Jack Barnard on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1907 in Bridgwater, Somerset, and included in 'Still Growing', edited by Steve Roud, Eddie Upton, and Malcolm Taylor, and published in 2003 by The English Folk Dance & Song Society in conjunction with Folk South West. Other versions call it *The Lady of Riches* which might well be a better title, as it is she who calls all the shots and saves the day, even if she can't resist being a bit of a tease!

### ③ THE BARBADOS LADY

Cecil Sharp called this song Nancy of Yarmouth, thereby guaranteeing that it would be confused with the other and quite different sea song of the same name. His "Nancy" is, among other things, a ghost story and it is that on which I have focused. In the full story

events seem to tumble out in a quite arbitrary fashion lending to the narrative a quite astonishing complexity overall. I've concentrated on the middle of the story with its ghostly element adding to those of love, jealousy, yearning and loss. This mixes versions which Sharp had from William Hedges of Chipping Camden and the Bridgwater singer Jack Barnard: throw into the mix the version which he found during his Appalachian sojourn in 1916 and sung by Mrs Mary Sands of Allanstand, North Carolina, (whence the *Barbados Lady*) and there you are. Mrs Sands' melody is the kind for which I am a complete sucker and that's what is sung here.

### ④ LICHFIELD TATTOO • THE RADSTOCK JIG • THE QUICKSTEP FROM THE BATTLE OF PRAGUE

These three tunes are all particular favourites of Mr Brinsford, and are included at his behest. *Lichfield Tattoo* lies in the manuscript book of Isaac Oldfield from Kirby Langley, near Derby, who played in the Belper New Militia Regimental Band around 1820. It was dusted off for public consumption on the 1980 *Umps & Dumps* LP on Topic Records *The Moon's in a Fit*.

In Somerset on New Year's Eve, 1907, Cecil Sharp noted a few tunes from Shepton Mallet resident James Higgins, aged 89. This one, which appears in Mr Sharp's hand-written notebooks as *Radstock Tune*, was published by him soon after as *Radstock Jig* – a name it's been stuck with ever since. Even though we now realise he was inclined to make some very puzzling editorial decisions, none can be more puzzling than choosing such a name for a piece of music which is so profoundly not a jig at all. But, jig or not, all praise to Mr Higgins for having such a glorious and unique tune up his sleeve.

*The Battle of Prague: A Sonata for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord* was composed by Franz Kotzwara in 1788. He had been born in Prague, in the land of Bohemia, in 1730, and may well have witnessed the event itself in 1757 – Prussia v. Austria, in one of the bloodiest battles of the time. He roamed around Europe as a double bass player for hire, and by 1775, had ended up in London where he composed prolifically. Many of the melodies from his sonata (which has hardly ever been out of print since) were hijacked as dance tunes, and appear under a bewildering variety of names in a whole host of dance musicians' tune

books. Mr Kotzwara's main claim to fame, however, is not so much the fantastic popularity of his melodic genius, as the fact his death in London in 1791 was one of the first recorded examples of auto-erotic asphyxiation, with details far too gruesome to go into here.

Our *Quickstep* (Turkish Music in the original) is from the manuscripts of the Northamptonshire poet and fiddler John Clare, as published by George Deacon in his 1983 book 'John Clare and the Folk tradition'.

### ⑤ THE TREES THEY DO GROW HIGH

This is from a cylinder recorded by Ralph Vaughan Williams before World War One, from the locally celebrated singer and landlord of the Plough Inn at Ruspur, Mr Penfold, who also sang for him the version of *The Turtle Dove* so beloved of the great man. I believe that this particular melody has not been published previously and it really is a little beauty. The song is found in many versions all over the British Isles and Ireland, all of them with differing and equally beautiful melodies, for the story really did - and does - capture the imagination of country people. As with many of these songs there are those who try to tie the story to actual historical events, but I must say that I don't believe it myself, and prefer to think of the popular imagination at work. When Francis James Child heard the song he was not impressed and, along with quite a few other equally deserving songs, he refused to include it in his stupendous collection, to the enduring bewilderment of many then and since.

### ⑥ BANBURY BILL • THE OLD WOMAN TOSSED UP IN A BLANKET • THE BEAUX OF LONDON CITY • HUNT THE SQUIRREL

Four tunes used for morris dancing in the Cotswold style of the South Midlands, although we do not necessarily play them as they would be for the dance. *Banbury Bill* comes from Bampton in Oxfordshire; *The Old Woman Tossed Up In a Blanket*, usually played as a jig in 6/8 time, comes in this 4/4 version from Sherborne in Gloucestershire; *The Beaux of London City* comes from Badby in Northamptonshire; and *Headington Quarry*, near Oxford, provides us with theme and variations for *Hunt the Squirrel*, according to which musician played it at the time.

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- PAUL ARCHIBALD trumpets, piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn, chorus vocals
- MARTIN BRINSFORD percussion, harmonica, saxophone, chorus vocals
- MARTIN CARTHY guitar, vocals
- JOHN KIRKPATRICK button accordion, anglo concertina, melodeon, vocals
- ROGER WILLIAMS bass & tenor trombones, euphonium, chorus vocals

Paul Archibald plays Eclipse trumpets.  
Roger Williams plays Michael Rath trombones.



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Featuring:

Martin Carthy  
John Kirkpatrick  
Martin Brinsford  
Paul Archibald  
Roger Williams

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|----|--|------|
| 1  | Moldavian Schottische/The Snowdrop Polka   | 5.40 |
| 2  | The Press Gang   | 6.52 |
| 3  | The Barbados Lady  | 4.40 |
| 4  | Lichfield Tattoo/The Radstock Jig/The Quickstep From 'The Battle of Prague'                  | 6.17 |
| 5  | The Trees They Do Grow High  | 5.32 |
| 6  | Banbury Bill/The Old Woman Tossed Up in a Blanket/The Beaux of London City/Hunt the Squirrel | 6.45 |
| 7  | Bold Archer/Dearest Dicky  | 9.18 |
| 8  | The Red Lion Hornpipe/Peckett's Hornpipe/The Welch Hornpipe                                  | 5.22 |
| 9  | The Loss of the Ramillies  | 4.50 |
| 10 | Nelson, the Fallen Hero/The Death of Nelson  | 6.59 |

Dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague, Howard Evans

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